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Reported Speech

A request is when somebody asks you to do something – usually politely. Reported requests are one form of reported speech.

| direct speech | reported speech |
|---|---|
| She said: " Could you open the window, please? " | She asked me to open the window. |
| He said: " Please don't smoke. " | He asked them not to smoke. |

We usually introduce reported requests with the verb "ask". The structure is very simple:

| | | | | |
|-----|---|---------|---|---------------|
| ask | + | noun | + | to infinitive |
| | | pronoun | | |

- We **asked** the man to help us.
- They **asked** us to wait.

Because we use the infinitive there is no need to worry about tense. But as with reported statements and reported questions, we may need to change **pronouns** as well as **time** and **place** in reported requests.

Here are some examples:

| direct speech | reported speech |
|---|---|
| I said politely, "Please make less noise." | I asked them politely to make less noise. |
| She has often said to me, "Could you stay the night?" | She has often asked me to stay the night. |
| They said to the architect: "We'd like you to meet us here tomorrow." | They asked the architect to meet them there the next day. |
| She will certainly say to John, "Please stay for lunch." | She will certainly ask John to stay for lunch. |
| She always says, "Please don't forget me." | She always asks me not to forget her. |

Notice above that we report a negative request by using **not**.

Reported Orders



An order is when somebody tells you to do something and you have no choice. It is not usually polite. It is a "command".
Reported orders are one form of reported speech.

| Direct order | Reported order |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| She said: " Stop! " | She told him to stop . |

We usually introduce reported orders with the verb "tell". The structure is very simple:

| | | | | |
|------|---|---------|---|---------------|
| tell | + | noun | + | to infinitive |
| | | pronoun | | |

- We **told** the man not to smoke.
- The policeman **told** us to follow him.

Because we use the infinitive there is no need to worry about tense. But as with reported statements and reported questions, we may need to change **pronouns** as well as **time** and **place** in reported requests.

Here are some examples:

| direct order | reported order |
|--|--|
| She said, "Eat your food now!" | She told the boy to eat his food right then. |
| The policeman said: "Get out of your car!" | The policeman instructed us to get out of our car. |
| She said, "You must make the bed before you go to work!" | She told her husband to make the bed before he went to work. |
| The doctor said: "Don't smoke in here!" | The doctor told them not to smoke in there. |

Notice above that we report a negative order by using **not**.

The most common verb for reporting an order is "tell", but we can also use other verbs such as: *order*, *command*, *instruct*. For example:

The sergeant **commanded** his men to stand straight.